

Emergency Notification Protocol

I. Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to guide the University in the authorization and issuance of messages via its emergency notification channels. These channels of communication can be used during emergencies or situations in which the campus is in imminent danger and individuals should take immediate safety precautions. They can also be used to notify the community of closures, delays, utility failures, or other events which cause a significant disruption of campus services.

This protocol provides a projection of emergency notification needs and anticipated responses. The protocol is not a replacement for good judgment and leadership in times of crisis. Further, it is not intended to be a set of all-inclusive instructions for responding to an emergency, as each situation will differ and individually accounting for the innumerable variables involved is not realistic.

Note: Decision making for winter weather related closures occurs through a separate process, and notification is initiated as soon as possible following a decision.

II. Communication Channels

For the purposes of this protocol, the following communication channels will be considered as part of the university's emergency notification system:

Norse Alert: A multi-modal alert and notification system provided by Rave Mobile Safety. Alerts generated within the system can be sent via SMS, telephone (voice), e-mail, and social media. University Police is responsible for sending Norse Alerts.

Federal Signal Public Address and Siren System: This system consists of outdoor warning sirens and indoor loudspeakers capable of broadcasting alert tones along with preprogrammed messages. The system is also capable of broadcasting live voice warnings via a microphone located on the base stations at University Police dispatch, Maintenance and Operations, and the power plant. University Police is responsible for activating the public address and siren systems.

Email: Emergency notifications can be sent to official nku.edu email address via the nkufly and nkustudentfly listservs. In the event email is unavailable, communications will continue on official NKU social media channels. Marketing and Communications is responsible for email notification.

NKU homepage: Emergency notifications and messages can be posted at <http://www.nku.edu>. Marketing and Communications is responsible for notifications on the NKU homepage.

Official NKU Social Media Accounts: Warnings sent via Norse Alert can be communicated on official NKU social media channels, including Twitter and Facebook. Marketing and Communications is responsible for notifications made via official NKU social media accounts.

III. Intended Use

Emergency notifications will occur upon confirmation of a dangerous situation which poses a threat to safety on the campus of Northern Kentucky University. Such situations include, but are not limited to:

- Active shooter

- Fire
- National Weather Service issued Tornado Warning for Campbell County, KY
- Hazardous materials release
- Presence of an explosive device

Emergency notification may be delayed if it will compromise the efforts of first responders to contain and/or resolve the situation.

As noted previously, components of this system can also be used to notify the community of closures, delays, utility failures, or other similar events which may not be immediately life threatening.

IV. Confirmation of Dangerous Situations

Dangerous situations may be confirmed in a variety of manners, depending on the type of situation.

Weather: Tornado warnings are considered to be confirmed when the National Weather Service issues a Tornado Warning for Campbell County, KY.

Crime-related: Crime related situations will be considered confirmed upon observation by a police officer or by a credible report from another police agency.

If a citizen or community member reports a situation in which harm is actively occurring, waiting for confirmation from an on-scene police officer may cause unnecessary delay. In such cases, the on-duty police dispatcher will immediately notify the Chief of Police or designee. Available information will be reviewed and the Chief of Police or designee will determine if sufficient information exists to immediately initiate emergency notification.

Other: Other situations can be confirmed by established authorities with expertise related to the emergency. Examples include: Campbell County Emergency Management, Central Campbell Fire Department, and Northern Kentucky Health Department.

V. Authorization of Emergency Notifications

The authorization process for emergency notifications will vary. The immediacy of threat to life safety and the time before that threat commences will dictate the approval process for notifications.

- Confirmed events which require **immediate action** to reduce a threat to life safety require authorization from the on-duty police supervisor or other higher ranking police official.
Example: Police officers respond to a report of a fight. Upon their arrival, a suspect brandishes a weapon and fires several shots before fleeing the scene.
- Confirmed events which may pose a threat to the community, but are not actively life threatening, require authorization from the Chief of Police in consultation with the Vice President for Student Affairs.
Example: A neighboring police department responds to a report of an armed bank robbery in close proximity to the University's boundaries. The suspect has fled the scene and their whereabouts are unknown.
- Unconfirmed events will trigger an emergency notification when, in the judgment of the Chief of Police or designee, available information is sufficient to suggest that an event is likely to be active, harmful, and life threatening.

Example: Multiple callers to the dispatch center have reported the sound of gunshots and screaming in an academic building.

The Federal Signal Public Address and Siren System may be activated by a police dispatcher, without further authorization, during National Weather Service declared Tornado Warnings for Campbell County, KY. The dispatcher will also sound the all-clear message when the Tornado Warning has been lifted.

VI. Status Updates and All-Clear Messages

Status updates will be sent, as appropriate, as situations evolve and new information is available. Follow-up messages will be sent in accordance with the provisions of this protocol.

All-clear messages will be sent, as appropriate, when an emergency has been resolved.

All-clear messages will also be sent, as appropriate, if notification was delayed to allow first responders to contain and/or resolve a situation. Such instances include scenarios where an emergency was resolved before emergency notification was initiated.